The 2d Armored Cavalry Regiment's Outlook

by Sergeant First Class Thomas G. Adams

The 2d Armored Cavalry Regiment's (ACR) future has been discussed and written about ad nauseam. Which begs the question: What will it be like until then? Having been assigned to L Troop, 3d Squadron, 2d ACR for nearly six years, I have had some time to troubleshoot and problemsolve some of the capabilities and limitations of this organization. This is what I've come up with so far:

Issue: Increase Battlespace Management

Recommendation 1: The Army is buying a new laser target designator — give the old ones to the 2d ACR. The ground laser locator vehicle designator (GLLVD) uses the same thermal night sight that our current tube-launched, optically tracked, wire guided missile (TOW) systems use. Putting a GLLVD on each TOW not only increases options for the commander to use his copperhead artillery, it also allows the scouts to designate for Hellfire missiles, thereby decreasing or eliminating the warrior's flight time to and from the forward area arming and refueling point to reload a Hellfire. With the scouts designating the targets, the OH-58 Kiowa can stay out of contact, fire from a safer position with a fire-and-forget technique that further reduces turn around time for the next shot. Not having to acquire and track their own targets greatly increases the Kiowa's rate of fire and survivability, and because the Army does not have to buy new lasers, this option is inexpensive and available before 2010.

Recommendation 2: The Army is getting a new light howitzer to replace the current 105mm — again, give the old ones to the 2d ACR. The 120mm mortar only has 7,200 meters of range. With these mortars, a 2-kilometer doctrinal distance from the forward line of own troops and the doctrinal or extended frontage of the ground cavalry troop (GCT), the effective range at the troop boundaries creates seams that are too often exploited by the opposing force or the enemy. Replacing the 120mm mortar with the 105mm towed howitzer eliminates the indirect fire seams between the GCT and squadron. It also increases the sustained rate of fire and adds a direct fire antitank option for the GCT commander. The primary mover remains a HMMWV and troop-end strength stays the same with an MOS change from 11C to 13B, or consolidate the mortars into a squadron mortar platoon with a slight increase in 13B manning.

Recommendation 3: Change the squadron's howitzer battery to 105mm. This increases the squadron's deployability, mobility, and flexibility by adding antitank/direct fire capabilities, increasing sustained rate of fire, and changing the primary mover to a HMMWV. The howitzer battery's unit basic load of ammunition can be increased by using 5-tons as ammo haulers, or reduce the squadron/regiment logprint by changing ammo haulers to HMMWVs. The squadron commander does lose some ammo options by switching to 105-mm; organizing a regimental howitzer battery of 155mm, or relying on attachments can offset this.

Issue: Maximize 155mm Towed Howitzer Capabilities and Minimize Limitations

The towed 155mm howitzers are very accurate, but are limited because it takes an excessive amount of time to emplace or react to an out-of-battery mission.

Recommendation: Small emplacement excavators (SEE) should dig in the trails of the howitzers, with alternate holes dug left and right of the main holes to react to out-of-battery missions. Time permitting, additional pre-dug holes or trenches could be used to provide full-sector or 360-degree capability. The SEE can also help lift the trails out of the holes when they need to be moved.

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